

forbidden to come to see us and to play with me. that has spoilt many pleasant hours for me, too. it was nice when we used to dress up in my fathers theatrical finery and cloaks. and when you made us dolls out of clay. or when we performed the olympian games. i was always the teacher when we played at school with our little brothers and sisters. arsinoe gave you most trouble. oh and what fun when we went fishing and when we brought home the fishes and mother gave us meal and raisins to cook them. do you remember the festival of adonis, and how i stopped the runaway horse of that numidian officer the horse had knocked over arsinoe, and when we got home mother gave you an almond cake. and your ungrateful sister bit a great piece out of it and left me only a tiny morsel. is arsinoe as pretty as she promised to become it is two years since i last saw her; at our place we never have time to leave work till it is dark. for eight months i had to work for the master at ptolemais, and often saw the old folks but once in the month. we go out very little, too, and we are not allowed to go into your parents house. my sister is she pretty yes, i think she is. whenever she can get hold of a piece of ribbon she plait it in her hair, and the men in the street turn round to look at her. she is sixteen now. sixteen what, little arsinoe why, how long then is it since your mother died four years and eight months. you remember the date very exactly; such a mother is not easily forgotten, indeed. she was a good woman and a kinder i never met. i know, too, that she tried to mollify your fathers feeling, but she could not succeed, and then she need must die yes, said selene gloomily. how could the gods decree it they are often more cruel than the hardest hearted man. your poor little brothers and sisters the girl bowed her himself was startled for the moment, and looked back to see from whence it had come. at that moment charles angell dashed forward in a frantic manner. he had flung his gun from him; his eyeballs were fixed and staring; there was foam upon his lips; his hair was streaming in the wind. he bore an aspect so strange and fearful that the french uttered yells of terror, and fled helter skelter from the onslaught. but if any had had eyes to note it, there was one frenchman whose face became ashy white as he met the rolling gaze of those terrible, bloodshot eyes. he too flung away his gun, and uttered a frantic yell of terror, plunging headlong into the wood without a thought save flight. it is he it is he it is he this was the shout which rang from the lips of charles as he dashed after the retreating figure. all was confusion now amid french and rangers alike; that awful yell, and something in the appearance of charles, had startled friend and foe alike. there were several of the french soldiers left dead in the wood, and one was captured and made prisoner; but the rest had fled like men demented, and the rangers could not come up with them. as for charles and his quarry, they had disappeared, and it was long before any trace could be found of them. stark and fritz, however, would not give up the search, and at last they came upon the prostrate form of charles. he lay face downwards on the frozen ground, which was deeply stained with blood. his wrist was fearfully gashed by some knife; yet in his fingers he held still a piece of cloth from the coat of the french fugitive. it had been literally torn out of his grasp before the man could get free, and he had nearly hacked off the left hand of the hapless charles. yet thither where we have been, and you shall know the wherefore. in such sort made they answer to the folk. these two knights died in this holy life, nor were none other tidings never brought thence by them. they of that land called them saints. xxviihere endeth the story of the most holy graal. josephus, by whom it is placed on record, giveth the benison of our lord to all that hear and honour it. the latin from whence this history was drawn into romance was taken in the isle of avalon, in a holy house of religion that standeth at the head of the moors adventurous, there where king arthur and queen guenievre lie, according to the witness of the good men religious that are therein, that have the whole history thereof, true from the beginning even to the end. after this same history beginneth the story how brian of the isles renounced king arthur on account of lancelet whom he loved not, and how he assured king claudas that reft king ban of benoic of his land. this story telleth how he conquered him and by what means, and how galobrus of the red launde came to king arthurs court to help lancelet, for that he was of his lineage. this story is right long and right adventurous and weighty, but the